

Leo XIII has been abandoned by socialists (always vaunted as a marvel of apostolic subtlety), what is the object of these dialectics; what do their framers demand of the life to which, in their own vocabulary, God has called them? G. K. Chesterton, a splendid mediæval figure rollicking down Cheapside, would probably be content if all the city clerks wore smocks and the gates fell with a clang at sunset. It is simple enough to enjoy such an attitude and let it go at that. But think of a serious mediævalism which proposes to organize the industrial chaos of twentieth century England with peasant proprietorship, and fills the ears of Catholic sodalities with such antiquated terrorism as the Servile State.

"Whenever I hear of the collapse of a tradition," wrote Anatole France to Paul Hervieu, "I think with a sigh of the new one which will come to take its place, and I ask myself the question—will it not perhaps be more inconvenient and dangerous than the other?" It is the chance expression of a generous and classic mind passing through

a moment of weariness, of irony, one of those rare moments which are the small luxuries of the free-thinking spirit. But there are men who apply this paralyzing doubt to every human dilemma which they are called upon to face, and who apply it with all the austere Christian pessimism of those whose only hope is in eternity. And the desire was strong to say to all these neo-Catholics and New Witnesses, "Try to understand that the issues of the present hour have overflowed and submerged your little systems and interdicts. Do not say that if a thing is modern it is certainly untrue. Do not prohibit all experiment with the blighting indifference which is based on dread and nothing but dread; remember that adventure is the very ecstasy of statecraft." But I awoke to the banging of hard seats, and, emerging into the winter night which dominated the desolate common, I saw again all that dark, flowing, multitudinous life which never looks back, which never for an instant stands still.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

## Battles—New Style

**I**N the opening weeks of the present war the chief difference between its battles and those of the past was in size. Waterloo had been fought on a front of four miles, Gettysburg on one of less than ten, even the Franco-Prussian War saw no impressive expansion of the battle fronts. But the Battle of the Marne was a struggle—or a series of struggles—extending from the environs of Paris to the Argonne, considerably more than a hundred miles.

From the contest on a tremendously broad front the battle almost imperceptibly dropped to the level of a trenching contest. Again there was at the outset plain resemblance to our Civil War precedent, to the famous lines of Torres Vedras, behind which Wellington stood in the Peninsular war. Lee before Richmond fought in trenches for many months.

The development of the battle line in France from the Oise, to the Somme, to the Lys, to the Yser, may be compared with that of the parallel trenches of Lee and Grant from Petersburg to Five Forks; the main difference being that while Lee, having insufficient forces and unable to get reinforcements, was obliged to stretch his line so thin that Grant finally broke it and compelled the evacuation of Richmond, both the Germans and the Allies were able to bring up sufficient men to defend each new extension of the line.

The climax in this trench operation came at the

Battles of the Yser and of Ypres. Here the Germans were patently repeating Grant's Five Forks tactics. With overwhelming forces they attacked the thin Belgian and British forces on the Allied left, as Grant had similarly attacked Pickett on Lee's right. But the thin line held, the Germans were unable to pass the flank of the Allies.

The character of the struggle in the west again changed with the end of the two battles of Flanders. With one wing resting on Switzerland, the other on the North Sea, both German and Allied lines were now safe from all flanking operations, and the battle fronts had reached their maximum extension. Henceforth it was impossible to have recourse to any of the familiar methods of manoeuvring an army out of a position. There was left nothing but the costly and hazardous frontal attack against entrenched opponents.

From November to February, partly because of weather conditions, partly because the Allies were still lacking in numbers and heavy artillery, while the Germans were diverting their reserves to the east, there was little activity on the western front. But in February for the first time there begins to develop the new style of battle, which has now become familiar to all who read the war despatches.

The first example of this new style battle was in the Champagne. Here, on a front of about a dozen miles, the French concentrated some six

army corps, about 250,000 men, and an enormous mass of heavy artillery. Against the Germans, holding a low ridge, rising above the monotonous Plain of Champagne less than two hundred feet, they directed terrific artillery fire. Under cover of it they advanced slowly, beating off counter attacks until they had occupied the whole ridge, but their advance in a month did not average a mile on their active front.

The second example was far more illuminating. Having made a similar artillery concentration at Neuve Chapelle, the British suddenly opened a furious bombardment upon the Germans before them in the village of Neuve Chapelle, destroyed the village, wrecked the German trenches, and then occupied them before the Germans could recover from their confusion. The mission of the artillery in such an operation is first to reduce the enemy's trenches, then to build up a wall of fire between the enemy's reserves and their trenches, which have been shelled, under cover of which the infantry can advance and organize the captured trenches.

At Neuve Chapelle this method was followed, but unfortunately for the British the zone of fire between the German trenches and the German reserve was badly calculated and their own advance checked by the fire of British artillery. Once the British had taken the German trenches they followed the tactics of the French in Champagne—organized them and prepared for a counter attack. This came with great promptness, and for several days the fighting was desperate, but in the end the British hung on to their gain. In both the fighting in Champagne and about Neuve Chapelle there were patent results of great strategic advantage if the Allies could actually break through the German lines—that is, both the front and the reserve trenches. But in this in both cases they failed utterly.

Such advantages were to be expected only in case of overwhelming triumph, of success beyond any reasonable expectation. In addition there was another end sought. In these struggles, in the French campaign about St. Mihiel, the British at Hill 60 in Flanders, which followed, the Allies were plainly adopting the familiar Grant policy, attrition, which General Joffre has rechristened "nibbling." For Grant and for the western Allies the problem was the same. The time had now arrived when the numerical advantage of the Allies in the west was decisive and bound to grow. With 750,000 British troops in France, with the Belgian army reorganized, with French military establishment at the maximum of its possible strength and efficiency, the Germans were outnumbered in the west, not temporarily but permanently, since the

Russian campaign in the Carpathians was making new demands all the time upon them.

Thus, if the Allies could keep up sustained pressure from Switzerland to the sea, and furthermore, in local actions—which in reality were battles on larger scale than nineteenth century history records—make the German loss equal to or greater than their own, they must in time wear the Germans down to the point where their lines, like Lee's about Richmond, would be so thin that the Kaiser's generals would have to choose between retreat to a shorter line and disaster due to the breaking of the lines.

As the Allies now possessed a superiority of heavy artillery and, what was even more vital, of ammunition, their commanders reckoned that this policy of attrition could safely be pursued. Thus at Neuve Chapelle the loss of the British up to the time the German trenches were actually occupied was greater than that of the Germans. But the German counter attacks made in the open and in massed formation under artillery were, if British "eyewitness" reports are to be believed, much larger, and the total German loss 20,000 to 12,000. In addition, the French operation compelled the Germans to send to Champagne reserves stationed about Neuve Chapelle, and this permitted the British to make their attack. The French offensive in the St. Mihiel region was followed by a successful British advance at Hill 60 in Flanders, suggesting another defection of German reserves, which weakened the line in front of the British, with similarly costly consequences.

Without accepting the reports of the Allies as to their achievements too completely, it is possible to accept what they attempted as indicative of their strategy. To force the fighting, to kill as many Germans as possible, at least a number equal to their own losses, to play the Grant game on a stupendous scale, this was what General Joffre and Sir John French had now undertaken.

One more advantage the Allies had, and a great one. Such battles as were now fought demand enormous supplies of ammunition. The battle of Neuve Chapelle cost the British more ammunition than the whole Boer War. Here the Allies were able to draw upon the neutral world, upon the United States mainly, to supplement their own stocks. Russia, too, could draw on Japan and the United States by the Trans-Siberian. But Germany, shut in by the blockade, compelled to manufacture her own ammunition to meet Russian as well as French, British, Belgian and neutral production, lacking in copper, obliged to supplement Austrian as well as German supplies, seemed bound in the end to face a shortage of ammunition, conceivably before there was any lack of men.

Looking over the whole contest in the west from February to the approach of May, it will be observed that the Allies followed a consistent plan. Champagne, Neuve Chapelle, Les Eparges, Hill 60, were all battles of the new style; each was marked by immediate local success followed by tremendous counter attacks, in which German losses must have been great, even if no greater than those of their more numerous enemies. The German advance about Ypres, going forward as these lines are written, is an example of the new style battle in its details. But it may be reckoned, on present information, as a great counter offensive, the most ambitious for many months, necessitated by the successful British "nibble" at Hill 60.

Such, briefly, is the new style battle, as it is now being fought in France and Belgium. By adopting it the Allies seem to have resigned any plan for any "spring drive." Rather they have settled down to the method by which Grant destroyed Confederate military strength, to the strategy of Wellington in the Peninsular. Unless these plans are abandoned it seems inevitable that the summer will be the bloodiest in modern history, while the actual change in the battle lines in the west may be inconsiderable, if German resources in men and ammunition can last until autumn.

FRANK H. SIMONDS.

## Henry and Edna

**O**WING to the recent death of Edna's father, the wedding was to be quieter than Edna's mother would have liked it. When the two women were alone they spoke of the wedding as something whose quietness had to be borne with and forgiven. Edna's mother spoke in the same strain even when Henry W. Henry was with them. Although he regretted her tone, having liked Edna's father, Henry nevertheless listened with an air of slight continual deference. He had been brought up to show respect for age.

Sitting alone in his rooms, though never in more than one at a time, Henry regretted the antenuptial fuss, the acknowledgment of gifts, the passionate distracted shopping. He wondered how his wedding could have sounded any louder if it hadn't been muffled in bereavement. The noise of its approach was discordant. These should have been still and listening weeks, he felt, and dove-colored by thoughts of sweet and serious change. He determined to do something which would make his feeling plain. It was a worthy feeling. Something so new that it had never been done, or not done for years. He consulted the liberal education to which so many young men of ample means are somewhat exposed. He seemed

to remember that wedding songs were formerly commanded by the great. He knew a poet with a number in the telephone book, called him up and ordered a wedding song.

When the poet came, by appointment, he bore a lute in his hand, and began to sing the song he had written. This conduct was so surprising to Henry that at first he did not understand the words. Nor was his surprise less when he began to hear them. It was a song all of echoes, like the old songs in old books, telling how the maidens first undressed the bride, and then said good-bye to her who would not wake again a maid, but would rise with a new and nobler name. And in the song one prayed that the night might abide, and morning be long in coming.

Henry did not care for this song, which seemed to unshadow his domestic life, to pour an incurious bright light upon him and Edna.

Again the poet came, bringing this time a song made out of dreams. The strangest shapes of grotesque or very awful dreams, dreams which even to himself Henry had not told, which he hoped he had forgotten, whose remotest relevance to his marriage he had denied with outraged self-respect, dreams he had been afraid to look at—these the poet seized and related to one another and made into a prelude to marriage, the fulfilment of dreams. The poet remembered what he couldn't possibly have known. He remembered dreams that Edna, who was well brought up, never, never could have had.

Henry was shocked by this song, which dragged sinister and absurd things from their corners into the light and studied them with curious eyes.

When the poet came for the third time he brought a song which no poet wrote, most surely, but some man of figures with a turn for scansion and rhyme. This man treated Henry and Edna as if they were quite ordinary people, obedient to statistical laws that govern the herd. He reminded them that the shadow of divorce, though it fell across their wedded life, was no thicker than the shadow of a tall blade of grass, and that the rest of their future was sunlit. He explained this by addressing Henry and Edna in the cheerfulness stanza of his song:

Your chance of staying wedded until death  
Dissolve this holy union and ideal,  
Endowed with riches personal and real,  
Is twelve to one, the statistician saith.

Not even the poet seemed certain of this song's acceptance, for he brought with him a fourth, which sang minutely of announced engagements in the papers, of invitations to be addressed and stamped and posted, of the trousseau, its items, and of those present. It was a bleak picture of

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